2005 Annual San Mateo Summary Document (9/30/2005)

Since July 2004, San Mateo County, the San Mateo County Chapter of Surfrider, the San Mateo County Farm Bureau, the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, and local property owners have been working on the Gazos Creek Watershed Fecal Contamination Source Identification and Removal Project. The project is being funded through a Proposition 13 Clean Beach Initiative Grant from the State of California. The goal of this project is to find and remove sources of fecal contamination that affect water quality at Gazos Beach Access.

Mapping of the watershed was finally completed with the data being collected by foot using the "Rola tape" distance measuring wheel. This was required as it was not possible to get continuous GPS satellite readings in the canopy and further into the canyon.

Sampling has been on-going on a weekly basis as of September 14, 2004. All data has been maintained in an excel spreadsheet. The upper 3 samples sites were sampled continuously until county public works locked the gate to the gravel road (it is only open and maintained in the dry season). Permission and a key were obtained to enter. Sampling continued until the first storm brought down a tree and made the road impassable. No data was collected for the three sites from December 21, 2004 to June 28, 2005. One other sample site (GC6) succumbed to the weather, after being washed out in a storm January, 11 2005. All results have been within the guidelines (200 CFU E.coli per 100ml geomean) assumed for the project, save for one site that is a hillside runoff/drainage on the north side of the creek and drains into the main stem via a culvert downstream of GC4. The origination of this runoff is suspected to be at the top of the ridge, on the Camsco Mushroom Co property.

A mushroom processing plant situated on Highway 1, bordering the creek on the north side of Gazos Creek Road, was closed on January 10, 2005. The location included a residential property which had a septic system. This property was vacated at the same time the plant was closed.

On July 6th, 7th and 8th consecutive samples of the creek water were taken downstream of the leach field of a gas station septic system (located on Hiway 1 on the south side of the creek, downstream of GC4). Florizine dye testing of the septic system was conducted during the dry season and no fluorescence was noted in any of the creek samples.

On August 2, 2005 San Mateo Environmental Health conducted a change of ownership inspection for a restaurant near the gas station. Inspectors identified sewage overflowing into the back parking lot of the gas station. However, no sewage was seen entering the creek at that time. The failure of the septic system was due to the unauthorized connection of trailers to the septic system. The owners of the restaurant were instructed to have the leach line water tested, disconnect the trailers, provide a service agreement for the grease trap maintenance and have disposable dinning utensils to reduce water usage.

On August 04, 2005 verification was received that the septic system leach lines were water tested and that the system had passed. Clearance was issued to open the restaurant. No known sewage spills from the restaurant have been observed as of this time. However, the septic tank remains a potential source of creek contamination since it is located at the lowest point on the property.

The following is a schedule for the project:

TASK	DESCRIPTION	DATES
1	Project Management and Administration	Ongoing through March 2006
2	Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)	May 30, 2002
3	Known Source Identification of Pilarcitos and Frenchman's Creeks	Ongoing through June 2004
4	Sampling of Pilarcitos and Frenchman's Creeks	Ongoing through June 2004
5	Known Source Identification in Gazos Watershed	July 2004-January 2006
6	Sampling in Gazos Watershed	September 2004-February 2006
7	Reports	Quarterly through June 2005

To date, the project has been a success; the County has determined sources of high bacteria levels entering the Pacific Ocean at Venice Beach and the County will continue to find sources of bacteria with the ongoing sampling in the Pilarcitos and Gazos Watersheds. The project is an example of how cooperation between the State and Local governments and communities can achieve great results.